



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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A MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

At the ACT Office of the ABS we are continually striving to provide statistical products and services to the ACT community that enable informed decisions to be made. Over the last few years we have been continuously adjusting our product mix in order to achieve this. One of our more successful products is Canberra . . . A Social Atlas, produced every five years following the release of Population Census data. In response to the interest this product generates, we have plans to produce a similar atlas in each of the four years that the Social Atlas is not produced. ACT and Region . . . A Statistical Atlas will profile a selected range of social, economic and environmental data not only for Canberra, but also for the surrounding region. The Atlas will contain about a dozen maps around related themes, enabling easy and effective comparison between the suburbs of Canberra, and between the ACT and surrounding NSW areas. The topics in the 2004 edition, due for release in April, cover population, family and housing.

The ABS released the results from the 2002 General Social Survey in December last year. This was the first conduct of this survey, which covered a wide range of social data, including financial and personal stressors, IT use, participation in sport and recreation activities and the provision of support for children living outside the household. These data items are available for a range of personal and household characteristics, including disability status of the individual and income of the household. Data for the ACT is now available, and can be obtained by contacting the ACT Office.

The ABS has recently launched a new email notification service. Clients may register their interest in a topic on the ABS web site to receive an email alert whenever there is a release related to that topic. To subscribe, go to the ABS home page and click on the Email Notification Service link.

Don't forget the range of statistical training that the office makes available, ranging from how to use Census or labour force data, to how to make quality informed decisions (essential for anyone working with statistics).

Tracy Stewart
Regional Director, ACT Office
Australian Bureau of Statistics

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2002 GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY: SUMMARY RESULTS, AUSTRALIA

The General Social Survey: Summary of Results (4159.0) publication presents a range of characteristics of households and persons resident in private dwellings in Australia, compiled from the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS).

Many aspects of life are important to human well being. Among these are health, family relationships and engagement with wider social networks, educational opportunities and outcomes, employment and other work, financial resources, a place to live, personal safety and security, and access to transport. In 2002 the ABS conducted a new multi-topic social survey that ranged across all of these aspects of life. The GSS was conducted throughout Australia from March to July 2002 and summary results are presented in this publication. It is planned to repeat the survey at four-yearly intervals.

The aims of the GSS are to:

- present data on a range of social dimensions of the Australian community at a single point in time
- by collecting data on a range of topics from the same individual, enable analysis of the interrelationship of social circumstances and outcomes, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage
- provide a base for comparing social circumstances and outcomes over time and across population groups

The 2002 GSS collected information from 15,500 people aged 18 years and over across all states and territories of Australia. Information was collected about both the individuals being interviewed and about the households in which they lived. Only a small number of topics could be included in the survey under each of the social dimensions being explored, but the information collected will enable research links to be made to more detailed data from other ABS surveys focused on particular social dimensions.

The publication also provides information to assist users in interpreting and using the results of the survey, including descriptions of the survey design and methodology and notes on the quality of estimates and their comparability with data from other ABS surveys. Information on other products and services available from the survey, including detailed tabulations by state and territory, is also provided.

The GSS will provide a rich source of data for analysis of the well being of Australians. As well as assisting researchers in accessing and using GSS data, ABS is conducting a multivariate analysis project using GSS data. Publication of the results of this analysis are

planned for early 2004.

A range of data will be made available from the GSS. A package containing sample copies of the GSS questionnaire and prompt cards, together with a list of output items from the survey is obtainable from the ABS web site free of charge. Versions of tables from this publication compiled separately for each state and territory are also available from the ABS web site. The tables are released at cat.nos. 4159.1.55.001 to 4159.8.55.001.

Detailed information on GSS content, methodology, survey design and estimation will be included in the User's Guide also available on the ABS web site as cat.no. 4159.0.55.002. Microdata, subject to approval by the Australian Statistician, will be released in the form of two confidentialised unit record files (CURFs), the basic CURF and the expanded CURF. An information paper describing the content of both these CURFs will be produced.

Special tabulations of GSS data are available on request. Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, tabulations can be produced from the survey incorporating data items, populations and geographic areas selected to meet individual requirements which can be provided in printed or electronic form.

Detailed results from the supplementary topics included in the GSS have been released separately in the following publications.

- Household Use of Information Technology, Australia (cat.no 8146.0)
- Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia (cat.no 4114.0)
- Sports Attendance, Australia (cat.no. 4174.0)
- Participation in Sport and Physical Activities, Australia (cat.no.4177.0)

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DEVELOPING EXPERIMENTAL SPATIAL PRICE INDEXES FOR AUSTRALIA

ABS has for many years published the Consumer Price Index (Consumer Price Index, Australia Cat. no. 6401.0). The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the movements over time in retail prices of goods and services commonly purchased by metropolitan households. Although a separate index is available for each of the 8 capital cities (i.e. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Darwin and Canberra), the eight indexes cannot be used to compare price levels between the cities.

This project assesses the feasibility of using existing CPI data to produce experimental measures of price differences between the eight capital cities (i.e. spatial price indexes). The indexes cover the year ended June 2002.

Using the CPI sample to compare prices between cities, posed some theoretical and practical problems. For example, some items are priced in only one capital city and the item specifications may vary slightly from city to city. These properties of the dataset do not hinder the construction of intertemporal indexes, but are a major hindrance to the construction of spatial indexes. Thus, the first stage of the study addressed the problem of bridging gaps in the dataset and resolving differences in specifications.

The spatial price indexes were calculated based on the multilateral Elteto-Koves-Shultz (EKS) formula. This formula has been used by the OECD's Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) Program in the construction of its official PPPs.

So far we have produced the indexes for the following CPI groups:

1. Food;
2. Alcohol and tobacco;
3. Clothing and footwear;
4. Household furnishings, supplies and services;
5. Health;
6. Transportation;
7. Communication;
8. Recreation; and
9. Education;

Preliminary assessments suggest that the index numbers look broadly plausible. However, price observations for some "services" such as Housing and Miscellaneous were deemed unsuitable for spatial comparisons and consequently they have been excluded from the spatial price indexes for the time being. The index numbers for health, education and transportation showed larger inter-city variations than we expected and as a result need further investigation. We will continue to improve these areas in the future.

The ABS plans to publish a paper presenting the experimental spatial price indexes and will be grateful for readers' comments and suggestions on how we may further improve the indexes. The paper reports our work-in-progress thus far. As a result, the indexes should not be used in policy debates, or for official purposes, until the ABS validates the statistics and publishes them in an official publication

For further information about this project, contact Alex Waschka on 02 6252 6992 or email alex.waschka@abs.gov.au , or Shiji Zhao on 02 6252 6053 or email shiji.zhao@abs.gov.au.

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ACT AND REGION . . . A STATISTICAL ATLAS TO BE RELEASED IN APRIL 2004
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ACT and Region ... A Statistical Atlas to be released in April 2004.

In line with improving the breadth and quality of small area data available for policy evaluation and other community decision-making purposes in Canberra and surrounding region, the ACT Regional office will release it's first in an annual series of publications ACT and Region . . . A Statistical Atlas (cat. no. 1381.8) in April 2004.

This will be a hard copy publication with colour maps illustrating a range of social, demographic and economic characteristics of the population of Canberra and the surrounding region. It is designed to complement Canberra . . . A Social Atlas (cat no 2030.8) produced every five years following release of results from the Census of Population and Housing. ACT and Region . . . A Statistical Atlas will be produced in each of the four years between the Social Atlas.

ACT and Region . . . A Statistical Atlas will present two maps on each topic. The first provides a comparison between suburbs (statistical local areas) of Canberra. The second will provide a comparison between the region, including the ACT and the surrounding statistical local areas of Queanbeyan, Yarrowlumla Part A, Boorowa, Crookwell, Goulburn, Gunning, Harden, Mulwaree, Tallaganda, Yarrowlumla Part B, Yass, Young, Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Bombala, Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Tumut.

The Atlas will contain a selected range of maps around several themes. The themes for the 2004 edition are population, family and housing. Twelve maps will be produced, with the topics for the maps being:

- 1 Population growth- percentage change in population between 1998 and 2003
- 2 Population density - number of people per square kilometre, as at 30 June 2003
- 3 Population turnover - people indicating a change of SLA between August 2000 and August 2001, as a percentage of usual residents at August 2001
- 4 Median age - as at 30 June 2002
- 5 Age dependency ratio - people aged 0 to 14 years and 65 years or older, as a percentage of people aged 15 to 64 years
- 6 Total fertility rate - the sum of age-specific fertility rates, averaged over three years 2000 to 2002
- 7 Participation rate of mothers with young children - females, with children aged 0 to 4, in the labour force as a percentage of the labour force, August 2001
- 8 Children in families with no employed parents - as a percentage of all dependent children, August 2001
- 9 Value of dwelling approvals - average value of new residential dwelling approvals, 2002-03
- 10 Number of bedrooms - average number of bedrooms in private dwellings, August 2001
- 11 Mortgage repayments - median monthly loan repayment, August 2001
- 12 Rent - median weekly rent, August 2001
- 13 Dwellings being purchased - as a percentage of all occupied private dwellings, August 2001

To place an order for this publication or for more information please contact Antony Perera on (02) 6207 0315 or (antony.perera@abs.gov.au).

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ACT IN FOCUS 2003 (cat.no.1307.8)
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ACT in Focus provides a detailed statistical review of important and interesting aspects of life in the ACT. It includes information on the environment, government, economy, people, education, labour market, business, housing, tourism, the Australian Capital Region and more.

The 2003 edition includes a feature article on Bushfires in the ACT. The article covers details of the most recent bushfires in the ACT, as well as past ACT fires. Also included is information relating to aspects such as financial costs and damage done and comparing the recent ACT bushfires with other natural disasters in Australia.

Highlights from the publication include Canberrans leading the nation in awareness of green-power schemes. Almost half (46%) the ACT's households indicated an awareness of

green-power energy schemes compared with approximately one-quarter (24%) nationally. In 2002 the ACT had 4,400 homes, or 4% of all households, connected to green-power compared with 3% nationally.

ACT businesses are more Internet savvy, leading the nation in Internet access and web presence. At June 2002 83% of businesses in the ACT had Internet access and 28% had a web presence.

Since 1999, Canberra has had the second highest increase in house prices of all capital cities, behind Brisbane. Moving annual median house prices in Canberra have increased 45% in the three years from 1999 to 2002 (from \$161,500 to \$234,200).

Further details are in ACT in Focus, 2003 (cat no 1307.8), a must for those who want topical and relevant facts about the ACT and surrounding area at their fingertips.

Developments for 2004

The ABS also accepts suggestions for topics for inclusion in this publication. If there is a topic that you believe would be informative and relevant please contact us.

For more information please contact Fiona Wellsmore on (02) 6205 0032 or fiona.wellsmore@abs.gov.au

Other ABS Output products

Prisoners in Australia (4517.0)

This publication, released on 22 January 2004, contains national information on prisoners who were in custody on 30 June each year. The statistics are derived from information collected by the ABS from corrective services agencies in each state and territory. Details are provided on the number of people in correctional institutions (including people on remand), imprisonment rates, most serious offence and sentence length. A range of information is also presented on prisoner characteristics (age, sex, Indigenous Status) and on the type of prisoner (all prisoners, sentenced prisoners, and unsentenced prisoners (remandees)).

Criminal Courts, Australia (4513.0)

This publication, released on 25 February 2004, contains nationally comparable data showing the number of defendants dealt with by the higher (Supreme and Intermediate) and lower (Magistrates) criminal courts, details on the characteristics of those defendants (such as age and sex), and outcomes associated with adjudicated defendants (including penalty type and quantum) by the type of offence committed. Information is presented for each state or territory (including the aggregate total for Australia) and for each court level (including the aggregate total for higher courts combined).

For a copy of these products, contact the ACT Office bookshop on 6207 0326.

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The ACT Office will be offering a variety of statistical training courses during 2004.

Statistical courses are primarily aimed at ACT Government employees but are also of value

to anyone who produces, or uses, statistics in decision making, and particularly for people who make use of ABS data on a regular basis.

The courses will provide a unique opportunity for you to receive statistical training in conjunction with other staff from a wide range of ACT Government departments and agencies.

We now have 5 regular courses running:

Making Quality Informed Decisions is a two day training course which educates participants in the use of the data quality framework when making decisions based on statistics.

Key issues to be covered during the seminar include:

- the six aspects of data quality
- clarification of data needs using the data quality framework
- ability to assess the quality of data in the context of the data need
- use results of data evaluation to apply risk management principles and make informed decisions
- overview of data available to ACT Government through the ABS@ACT Government service

Turning Data Into Information is a two day course that develops skills in interpreting, communicating and displaying data clearly and effectively. This course is especially relevant for people who are involved with monitoring and evaluation within a social context.

Course Benefits:

- ability to understand how the collection and compilation of data affects its usefulness, quality and relevance
- ability to communicate results and write effective reports
- ability to construct good tables and graphs
- ability to recognise the pitfalls in analysis

Understanding Census Data is a one day course designed to educate participants on what Census data is available, where it is, what it means and how to use it.

At the end of the course you should:

- be able to work out the best Census data items to use for your purposes
- know where to find products containing these data
- understand the uses of various geographic areas in Census data
- know which type of population count to use in which circumstances
- be able to perform some basic interpretation on Census data
- understand the limitations and pitfalls in using the Census as a data source

Understanding Demographic Data is a one day seminar which aims to help participants better understand demographic trends and utilise demographic data. The seminar provides awareness of demographic data produced by the ABS and gives an introduction to demographic techniques which enable comparisons of demographic data between regions over time.

Key issues to be covered during the seminar include:

- relationship of Population Census counts to Estimated Resident Population data

- components of population growth, births, deaths and internal and overseas migration
- changing demographic trends
- how the ABS produces projections and population estimates
- tools for demographic analysis
- population dynamics

Understanding Labour Statistics is a one day seminar providing an overview of the range of concepts and issues associated with ABS labour statistics. It explores the data produced by both household and employer based collections, and highlights the range of products available to access labour-related data.

The course will consist of the following sessions:

- overview of ABS labour collections
- labour supply and labour demand
- measures of underutilised labour
- labour market dynamics
- describing employment conditions
- information about population groups (includes regions, Indigenous persons)
- earnings and labour costs
- industrial relations
- Guide to ABS data sources (includes publications, spreadsheets, datacubes, standard errors, original/trend and seasonally adjusted)

If you are interested in any of the above mentioned courses please do not hesitate to contact me for further information and booking details.

Look forward to seeing you.

Victoria Allen

02 6207 0277

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TOURISM ACTION PLAN

The ABS hosted the tourism statistics consultative group meeting in August 2003. Users discussed the tourism information development plan (IDP) and the strategies proposed by the ABS following the review of the survey of tourist accommodation (STA).

Participants supported the development of the tourism IDP. The plan will identify the data needs of key stakeholders and encourage industry and government to adopt a broad, strategic and coordinated approach to the development of tourism statistics.

Users asked the ABS to develop a tourism action plan to coordinate key actions for improving tourism information. A draft was recently sent to users for comment. The ABS will continue to seek feedback from key users. An important part of this process will be reaching agreement on action points and commitment to their progression.

These developments will be considered in the context of government policy such as the Tourism White Paper.

For more information contact Linda Fardell on 02 6252 6348 or linda.fardell@abs.gov.au

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GEOCODING - MESH BLOCKS, THE BASE UNIT

Across its statistical collections the ABS uses a common standard for geographical areas known as the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). The smallest building block currently in use for statistical data collection is the Census Collection District (CD), typically comprising 100 to 220 households. CDs are, however, subject to certain constraints, consequently they do not always align to desired geographic regions.

One method of avoiding this shortcoming is through the use of geocoding - a process of allocating latitude and longitude to each individual dwelling or business, thereby describing its position on the surface of the earth. Once a statistical unit has been geocoded it is a relatively simple process to code it to any geographical classification simply by 'overlaying' the geocoded point with a set of regions in a Geographical Information System. The power of geocoding lies in the fact that once a statistical unit has been allocated a latitude and longitude it can be coded to any geographical classification. The ABS has been experimenting with the geocoding of statistical units for several years but until now geocoding has been relatively difficult due to poor address information, particularly in rural and regional Australia. The soon to be completed Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF) will solve many of the practical problems of geocoding and enable the ABS and others to cost effectively geocode large address lists. Geocoding of individual households, however, has the potential to create public concern about confidentiality.

To obtain most of the advantages of geocoding without any compromise to confidentiality the ABS proposes to develop a new micro-level geographical unit known as a mesh block. Mesh blocks will on average contain 20 to 50 households and could be created to align with the widest range of administrative and natural boundaries. Only very basic census data would be available at the mesh block level, perhaps only number of dwellings and population counts, but the full range of census data would be available for combinations of mesh blocks.

If statistical and administrative geographies are to share a common building block then mesh blocks must be implemented in a manner that is more consistent and precise than statistical applications alone would require. It is vital that state governments fully participate in the consultation process and inform the ABS on how to define mesh blocks in a way that would be consistent with state use for statistics but also for local authority boundaries, geographical names, electoral purposes, etc. Once designed and readily available, mesh blocks have the potential to become a new building block of Australian geography so that any organisation developing a set of regions would build up its areas simply by adding mesh blocks together in whatever combination best suited its purpose. This in turn would ensure that census data could be accurately derived for those regions.

A panel of experts is currently advising the ABS on ideal design parameters for mesh blocks and an ABS position paper was published in February 2004. Intensive consultation with states and territories and other key stakeholders will take place in March/April 2004.

For further information contact Frank Blanchfield on 02 6252 7759 or frank.blanchfield@abs.gov.au

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THE AUSTRALIAN CENSUS ANALYTIC PROGRAM

The Australian Census Analytic Program (ACAP) is a collaborative venture between the ABS and some of Australia's foremost academics and social science researchers.

The 2001 Census of Population and Housing provides a vast amount of information about contemporary Australian society, including ethnic diversity, labour force activity, income, housing, and the use of information technology. ACAP publications cover a range of these themes; combining detailed analysis of census data with information from other sources. While the census provides extensive information about Australian society, combining it with other data sources greatly increases the potential for valuable research and analysis.

Each ACAP monograph advances our understanding of Australia's social, cultural and economic environment. Findings are geared towards practical policy development rather than a purely academic audience and will contribute to the policy agenda over the next decade.

This issue-driven research goes beyond the usual summary analysis of census data and contains important but previously unrevealed information about major trends and issues.

There were eight projects conducted under the Australian Census Analytic Program, with monographs progressively released as they become available.

Counting the Homeless 2001

Assoc. Prof. Chris Chamberlain, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, RMIT University & David MacKenzie, Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University

This research attempts to establish the extent of homelessness in Australia in 2001. It draws on earlier research, data from the 2001 Census, and survey and administrative data. Its findings will have direct implications for policy developers at both federal and state level.

Caring Labour in Australia's Community Services

Dr Gabrielle Meagher, School of Economics and Political Science, & Dr Karen Healy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

This project explores the composition, structure and dynamics of the labour force involved in community services in Australia. It examines who carers are, their skills, income and ethnicity. There is an ever-increasing demand for caring services in Australia and this publication is important to understand the factors that influence service delivery.

Indigenous Australians in the Contemporary Labour Market

Dr Boyd Hunter, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University

This publication provides, for the first time, a comprehensive appraisal of Indigenous labour force status. While the main sources of data are the 1996 and 2001 Censuses, this monograph provides a history of labour force trends from as far back as the 1971 Census. It also examines demographic factors underlying the differences in labour force outcomes for indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Australia's Most Recent Immigrants

Professor Graeme Hugo, National Key Centre for the Application of GIS, University of Adelaide

This research looks at the characteristics of recent immigrants to Australia and their influence on factors such as the labour market and the housing sector. It also includes comparisons with less recent immigrants and those born in Australia.

Australian's Ancestry: 2001

Dr David Lucas & Dr Siew-Ean Khoo, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University

This research examines a number of issues surrounding ethnic diversity, ethnic intermixture and the development of the concept of "Australian Ancestry". This publication also looks at issues such as people who stated multiple ancestries, ethnic intermarriage, and the characteristics of those who identified as being of Australian ancestry.

The Micro-dynamics of Change in Australian Agriculture, 1976-2001

Dr Neil Barr, Centre for Land Protection Research, Victorian Department of Primary industries

This publication examines data from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing with data from the 2001 Agricultural Census in order to look at farming communities in their fullest context. The research explores the major occupational decision of farmers, changes in the structure of the farmer population and the social sustainability of farming communities. The monograph also provides a simple model of the farm sector used to project possible future farming population structures.

Australia Online: How Australians are Using Computers and the Internet

Dr Rachel Lloyd and Anthea Bill, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra

Questions about computer and Internet use were included in the census for the first time in 2001. This has provided the first real opportunity to fully examine the social, economic and regional factors that influence computer and Internet use. The findings of this research are valuable in the formulation of policies to help address this "digital divide" within Australia.

The Emergence of Low Fertility in Australia: Family Formation and Social Characteristics

Prof Peter McDonald and Dr Rebecca Kippen, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University

This research provides a detailed analysis of fertility trends in Australia, using data from the 2001 Census, previous censuses and other sources. This monograph also examines the influence of demographic variables such as level of education, labour force status, hours worked and ethnicity on patterns of family formation and levels of fertility.

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EXPECTED MAJOR ANNUAL AND IRREGULAR RELEASES

GENERAL

- 1301.0 Year Book, Australia, 2001 (February)
- 1381.8 ACT and Region ... A Statistical Atlas (April)

DEMOGRAPHY

- 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2002-03 (March)
- 3236.0 Household and family Projections, Australia, 2001 to 2026 (March)
- 3238.0 Experimental Estimates and projections of Indigenous Australians, 1991 to 2016 (March)
- 3412.0 Migration, Australia, 2002-03 (March)

SOCIAL

4102.0	Australian Social Trends, 2004 (June)
4130.0.55.001	Housing Occupancy and Cost, Australia, 2000-01 (March)
4231.0	Measuring Learning in Australia - Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics, 2003 (June)
4430.0	Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003 (June)
4510.0	Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia, 2003 (May)
4523.0	Sexual Assault in Australia: A Statistical Overview, 2004 (June)
4612.0	Concepts, Sources and Methods for Australia's Water, Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Accounts, 2001 (June)
4714.0	Indigenous Social Survey, 2002 (April)

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

5506.0	Taxation Revenue, Australia, 2002-03 (April)
5512.0	Government Finance Statistics, Australia, 2002-03 (April)

LABOUR FORCE

6293.0.55.009	Information paper: Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Improvement to Occupation Data, 1995-96 to 2000-01, 2000-01 (June)
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CONSUMER INCOME AND SPENDING

6348.0	Labour Costs, Australia, 2002-03 (June)
6523.0	Household Income and income Distribution, Australia 2002-03 (April)

SECONDARY INDUSTRY AND DISTRIBUTION

8129.0	Business Use of Information Technology, 2002-03 (March)
8127.0	Characteristics of Small Business, Australia, 2003 (April)
8155.0	Australian Industry, 2001-02 (March)
8221.0	Manufacturing Industry, Australia, 2001-02 (April)
8226.0	Electricity, Gas, Water and Sewage Operations, Australia 2001-02 (March)

HEALTH

8906.0	Australian Hospital Statistics, 2002-03 (June)
8934.0	Heart, Stroke and Vascular Diseases Australian Facts, 2003 (June)

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About this release

ABSTRACT - Statistical News: Australian Capital Territory provides new and relevant information about survey developments, information and training sessions, user consultations, major changes to the statistical program, state/territory data releases and significant ABS data releases.

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